

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 039457

FROM UNA

FOLLOWING REPEAT KINSHASA 1491 SENT ACTION SECSTATE INFO
BRUSSELS, ABIDJAN, DAR ES SALAAM, DAKAR, LUSAKA, MOSCOW, PARIS,
PRETORIA, CAPE TOWN, LUBUMBASHI, HAVANA, BUKAVU (POUCH)
13 FEB 78

QUOTE C O N F I D E N T I A L KINSHASA 1491

PRETORIA FOR EMBASSY CAPE TOWN

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: AO, CG, PEPR

SUBJECT: FEBRUARY 10 MEETING WITH MOBUTU: ANGOLA

1. IN DISCUSSING ANGOLA DURING MY FEBRUARY 10 MEETING WITH MOBUTU IN
ABIDJAN, I REITERATED OUR BELIEF THAT NORMALIZATION OF ZAIRIAN-ANGOLA
N

RELATIONS THROUGH NEGOTIATIONS WOULD BE OF BENEFIT TO BOTH SIDES.
MOBUTU AGREED, BUT INDICATED HE WAS NOT OPTIMISTIC RE PROSPECTS FOR
EARLY NORMALIZATION. HE HAD LITTLE TO SAY ABOUT LAST MONTH'S
BILATERAL MEETING IN BRAZZAVILLE, OTHER THAN TO CONFIRM OUR IMPRES-
SION THAT NOT MUCH PROGRESS HAD BEEN MADE. AND HE ACKNOWLEDGED --
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PAGE 02 STATE 039457

BUT WITHOUT ELABORATION OR INTERPRETATION -- MY OBSERVATION THAT
LUANDA MEDIA HAD BEEN RECENTLY STEPPING UP PROPAGANDA DIRECTED
AGAINST ZAIRE.

2. AS FOR THE SITUATION IN SHABA, MOBUTU SAID THERE WAS EVIDENCE
OF INCREASING HOSTILE ACTIVITY ALONG THE BORDER IN RECENT WEEKS.
MOREOVER, INTELLIGENCE REPORTS INDICATED ANGOLA INTENDS TO INCREASE

BORDER PRESSURE FARTHER WEST NEAR THE REGIONS OF THE KASAI (TCHIKAPA AREA) AND BAS ZAIRE. MOBUTU DID NOT EXPECT MAJOR CROSS-BORDER ATTACKS, ALONG THE LINES OF LAST YEAR'S SHABA INVASION; INSTEAD HE ANTICIPATED A GRADUAL INCREASE IN SMALL-SCALE GUERRILLA ACTIVITY DESIGNED TO SUBVERT ZAIRE OVER THE LONG RUN.

3. I SAID THAT WASHINGTON CONTINUED TO FOLLOW THE BORDER SITUATION CLOSELY AND THAT, IN THIS CONNECTION, DURING MY FORTHCOMING CONSULTATIONS I EXPECTED TO ENCOUNTER CONTINUING CONGRESSIONAL CONCERN RE POSSIBLE TRANSFERS OF MILITARY EQUIPMENT FROM ZAIRE TO UNITA. AS MOBUTU WAS AWARE, SUCH TRANSFERS PARTICULARLY INVOLVING ANY US EQUIPMENT, COULD HAVE A NEGATIVE IMPACT ON CONGRESSIONAL SUPPORT FOR OUR IMPORTANT ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS IN ZAIRE.

I SAID THAT, IN THIS REGARD, I WAS PLEASED TO BE ABLE TO CITE MOBUTU'S ASSURANCES IN HIS JANUARY 6 SPEECH TO THE DIPLOMATIC CORPS THAT ZAIRE WOULD NEVER SERVE AS A BASE FOR OPERATIONS OR SUBVERSION AGAINST A NEIGHBORING STATE. MOBUTU NODDED, AND REMINDED ME THAT HE HAD MADE SIMILAR ASSURANCES TO CODEL PRICE IN DECEMBER.

4. TURNING TO THE SITUATION IN ANGOLA, MOBUTU ASSERTED THAT THE SOVIETS, CUBANS AND CERTAIN OTHER COMMUNIST GOVERNMENTS INCLUDING THE ROMANIANS WERE NOW PUSHING NETO TOWARD NEGOTIATING A POLITICAL ACCOMMODATION WITH SAVIMBI'S UNITA. I EXPRESSED SURPRISE, AND SAID I HAD HEARD THERE MIGHT BE SOME DIFFERENCE OF VIEW BETWEEN THE SOVIETS AND CUBANS ON THIS QUESTION. BUT MOTUTU, WITHOUT CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 03 STATE 039457

REVEALING THE SOURCE OF HIS INFORMATION, SAID HE WAS QUITE SURE THE TWO WERE WORKING TOGETHER. HE ASSERTED FURTHER THAT A MAJOR OBJECTIVE OF THEIR STRATEGY WAS TO NEUTRALIZE UNITA AND THEREBY HAVE A FREER HAND TO INCREASE PRESSURES ON ZAIRE. THERE WAS NO QUESTION THAT ZAIRE REMAINED A HIGH-PRIORITY TARGET; THIS WAS CONFIRMED, MOBUTU CLAIMED, BY REPORTS THE GOZ HAD OBTAINED CLANDESTINELY OF CASTRO'S MEETINGS IN TANZANIA DURING HIS VISIT THERE LAST YEAR.

5. IN RESPONSE TO MY QUERY, MOBUTU SAID THAT SO FAR SAVIMBI WAS RESISTING THE IDEA OF AN ACCOMMODATION WITH NETO. HOWEVER, VARIOUS PARTIES INCLUDING HOUPHET-BOIGNY WERE TRYING TO INDUCE HIM TO MOVE IN THAT DIRECTION. MOBUTU SAID THAT HE, TOO, WOULD ENCOURAGE SAVIMBI ALONG THIS LINE, NOTING THAT UNITA FOREIGN MINISTER SANGUMBA WAS AT THAT MOMENT IN ABIDJAN. ELABORATING HIS VIEWS ONLY SLIGHTLY, MOBUTU SAID NAMIBIAN INDEPENDENCE, WHICH SEEMED TO BE NEARING REALITY, WOULD SERVE TO DESTROY UNITA'S MILITARY CAPABILITY; THE IMPLICATION BEING THAT UNITA -- "EVEN IF SAVIMBI HAD TO LEAVE THE COUNTRY FOR AWHILE" -- WOULD BE BETTER OFF IN THE LONG RUN TO SEEK AN EARLY, AT LEAST TEMPORARY, POLITICAL ACCOMMODATION RATHER THAN RISK MILITARY DEFEAT.

6. COMMENT: MOBUTU HAS ALWAYS PLAYED HIS ANGOLAN CARDS CLOSE TO HIS CHEST, AND I WAS UNABLE TO ELICIT A BROADER EXPLANATION OF WHAT SEEMS TO BE A SOMEWHAT NEW DIRECTION IN HIS THINKING ON ANGOLA. FOR EXAMPLE, WE ARE UNABLE TO CONFIRM EITHER THE SOURCE OR THE VALIDITY OF MOBUTU'S CONTENTION THAT THE SOVIETS AND CUBANS ARE PRESSING NETO TOWARD RECONCILIATION WITH UNITA. NOR IS IT ENTIRELY CLEAR HOW MOBUTU SQUARES HIS OWN ADVOCACY OF RECONCILIATION WITH HIS EXPRESSED CONCERN THAT THE ULTIMATE SOVIET/CUBAN OBJECTIVE IN PURSUING THIS COURSE IS TO BRING GREATER PRESSURE ON ZAIRE. IT IS OF COURSE POSSIBLE THAT MOBUTU'S POSTURE IS DESIGNED TO COMPENSATE FOR, IF NOT MASK, CONTINUING COOPERATION WITH OTHER GOVERNMENTS IN AIDING UNITA. OR MOBUTU MAY IN FACT BE COMMITTED TO PARTICIPATING IN A RENEWED EFFORT TO END THE FIGHTING IN ANGOLA, PRESUMABLY WITH ASSURANCES (E.G. FROM FRANCE, MOROCCO, CONFIDENTIAL

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PAGE 04 STATE 039457

SAUDI ARABIA) OF CONTINUED SUPPORT FOR ZAIRE'S OWN SECURITY. WHATEVER THE PRECISE SCENARIO, IT WOULD SEEM LIKELY TO BE A MAJOR SUBJECT FOR CONSULTATIONS WITH THE EUROPEAN AND MODERATE AFRICAN STATES MOBUTU IS NOW VISITING. CUTLER

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